(d) if so, the action Government are taking in co-ordination with the Ministry of Commerce & Industry and other Ministries concerned, to stop importing obsolete computers and other electronic gadgets which form major e-waste in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has initiated stops to prepare a Manual on assessing e-waste in the country, for which the work has been awarded to a consultant.

(c) and (d) Electronic waste is included under List-A and List-B of Schedule-3 of the Hazardous Waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 1989 as amended in 2000 and 2003. E-waste is also regulated by the Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-Boundary Movement of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal. No country can export e-waste without written consent from the importing country. The import of this waste, therefore, requires specific permission of the Ministry of Environment & Forests. No such permission has been given to any authority or person by the Ministry till date for import of e-waste.

As per the Foreign Trade Policy 2004-2009, import of second hand computers is under the restricted category and their import requires an import licence. Such second hand computers are allowed to be imported for use in educational institutions, NGOs and charitable organisations of the country. Import licences are granted with the approval of an Inter-Ministerial Committee of the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT). As per the available information, the quantity of second hand computers, etc., permitted for import so far being small, the same does not form major constituent of e-waste in the country.

Damage to fragile environment

539. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any study was conducted by Government on the likely damages to fragile environment of Palk Straight and Gulf of Mannar and endangering the lives of Marine animals and Plants of the area as a result of Sethusamudram Project;

(b) if so, the details thereof including results of the study and the follow-up action proposed to be taken thereon; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to protect the environment of construction area while implementing the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report prepared by National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur has studied the various environmental impacts of the project including impact on endangered flora and fauna such as turtles, whales, dolphins, sea cows, seaweeds, sea grasses, coral reefs, etc. due to the implementation of the project. As per the study, no significant impacts are envisaged to these marine lives by the project.

(c) Government has stipulated a number of stringent environmental measures and steps while granting environmental clearance. Some of the important conditions stipulated are:—

(i) Discharge of bilge, ballast, treated sewage, solid wastes, oily wastes and spillage of cargo will not be allowed in Gulf of Mannar.

(ii) All the ships using the route should have proper treatment facilities for sewage through treated sewage will not be allowed to be discharged in Gulf of Mannar area.

(iii) Effective monitoring of aquatic ecosystem should be done to ensure that no damage is done to the turtles, dugongs, flora and other endangered species.

(iv) Environment Management Plan prepared by NEERI, Nagpur should be implemented.

Wildlife crime in the country

540. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Secretary General of Convention of International trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora has written to the PM expressing concern on wildlife crimes in the country;